

The Last Pendragon

by Norstra

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Summary: A child with a strong survivalist mentality will step onto platform 9 3/4. He is not what anyone expects. This is the story of Harry Potter The-Boy-Who-Lived, Ghost Freak, Evan Jameson, Lord Hadrian Peverell, and Dragon Lord Whild Pendragon.

1. Prologue

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter in any way shape or form. Any and all information that is directly quoted or taken from the books or movies belongs to Warner Bros. and/or J. K. Rowling.

This Story will diverge from the story and plot line of the Harry Potter series in an extreme way! If you don't like that don't read it. This story will not be slash. I'm rating it T to be safe because I honestly have no idea what it will be appropriate for.

* * *

><p>Prologue<p>

Harry stood in the middle of a graveyard. It was an old graveyard in an old town. Full of aging gray tombstones spread over a green carpet, the graveyard looked like many such establishments of the dead scattered throughout the small towns of England. But it wasn't. This was not the same as others because here rests the ancestors of one Hadrian James Evans Potter Peverell Gryffindor, last heir of the Pendragon line.

In Loving Memory of James Potter & Lily Potter

Yes, they both died on October 31, 1981; just as he was told by Hagrid a month ago.

"_The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death._"

What kind of tripe is that to be written on his parents graves? Who ordered that? Who had kept him from seeing it until now? Harry almost snarled as he turned away from the large marble stone marker. Death was, in a way, defeated (he supposed) when he survived, but the chosen quote didn't sit well with him. Not at all.

In the town he'd found a statue of him and his parents and their old house still blown to pieces set up as a memorial. In the book store, Flourish and Blotts, were several books making ambitious "factual" statements about his own life. Though he supposed they had finally been truthful about one thing, where his home was. Godric's Hollow. It all made him sick to his stomach. How was he to handle this new world? These people were ridiculous in so many ways. It scared him a little. Usually when he was forced in a new environment (rare though that may be) he would try to fade into the background as much as possible to see the rules of engagement, so to speak, before even contemplating when and how he would join the flow. This would apparently not be easy in this throw back world.

He took a deep breath and turned back around. "Hello. Sorry it took so long to find you again. I didn't know where you wereâ€|not even your names! I did try to find out about you I swear! All that got me was more bruises and more lies." A tear slowly dripped down the side of his face. "I know where you are now, though. Do you think, if I died, they'd put me with you? I suppose they wouldâ€|after all that would fit with the whole 'memorial' and 'celebrity' status I've been given. My death would make the front page news unlike my living circumstances. You have no idea what all I've found out in this last month. It's insane! I'm freaking out and haven't been able to eat for days at a timeâ€|well more days at a time than usual. I'm only telling you this because I think you must have actually cared. You MUST have. After all, you died for me. Then at least you, at the _very_ _least_ you mother, must have loved me, right? I'm ok on my own. I always have been! But, sometimes, even in my mind's home, sometimes I'm just so lonely. Please! Wherever you are, don't forget me. Please love me still." By this time Harry was huddled up next to the stone with tears pouring unchecked down his face. "I hope death isn't defeatedâ€|I hope it's a lie. I will be with you someday, so don't forget me."

He carefully placed the small bouquet of anemones at the base of the gravestone and stood up. After quickly scrubbing his tears away on his sleeves he turns towards the gate. It's time to head to London and Kings Cross Station in the morning.

2. Ch 1: Letters, Goblins, & Gold, Oh My!

I am American, so if I get pants and trousers etc. mixed up I do sincerely apologize in advance. Also, this chapter will have some details some might consider tedious, but I enjoy reading stories with these kinds of details so it's only natural they'd be in mine as well. Once again, if you hate that don't read it.
:)

"Conversations"

'Internal Monologues'

[Action]

* * *

><p>Chapter 1: Letters, Goblins, & Gold, Oh My!<p>

From the shadows of a pillar between platforms 9 and 10 at Kings Cross Station, Harry watched as people pushed their way through the crowd to their perspective destinations. Unfortunately, his destination was eluding him. Just one more thing that giant omitted telling him. Where was the stupid platform he was supposed to be on!? Well, at least he was early. He could always just watch for owl-carrying children to pass by and follow them. Yep. That would be the war plan! Watch and wait. After all, he'd perfected that strategy years ago.

While standing there leaning on the pillar nearest him, Harry started thinking back to the long crazy journey that had brought him to this crowded, intimidating place of hustle and bustle.

****Flashback to July 31****

Harry had been kicking himself mentally since the day that blasted letter, which was promptly followed by now hundreds more, had arrived. How was he to know that he should be looking out for a letter addressed to himself? As far as he was aware, no one even really knew he existed, let alone would write to him! If he had KNOWN he would have been looking for it, seen it when it arrived, and then slipped it under his cupboard door on his way back to the kitchen. But that wasn't what happened.

'Woe to me! No. WOE TO THE WRITER! Whoever thought it would be a great idea to send the Dursley's into a massive storm of paranoia owed him a heartfelt apology!' Harry nodded curtly to himself as he finished drawing the last of his birthday cake candles. Then, well thenâ€|someone smashed through the door of the decrepit excuse for a house the Dursley's were currently hiding in. From there his world went from weird to utterly insane. 'Oh and by the way it had just been a GIANT at the doorâ€|. Yepâ€| Insane.'

Anyways, Harry had been taken away from the death trap house on a rock in the ocean to a death trap pub on an alley in London (in the form of touchy feely looming witches and wizards). From there the next day he was rushed to the wizard equivalent of a theme park and bank hybrid, then onwards from store to store to store. After this alarmingly shocking day, he was dumped on a train headed back to Pivot Drive to wait a month for classes at Hogwarts to start. Such an odd name for a school, but then again, the alley had been a reenactment of the Victorian age so perhaps it was to be expected. In between stores Harry had been able to glean some interesting pieces of information from Hagrid (the resident giant tour guide). These little bits of life-changing data included but were not limited to the following: His parents had been killed during the First Wizarding War and not in a car accident; Hogwarts was a school for wizards, which was what he was apparently ('Who knew? Well my relatives I suppose.');

and that he definitely needed to check these stores out on his own so he could take his time.

****Morning After****

The next morning was almost like a normal morning, except he was in

Dudley's second bedroom and not his cupboard. His aunt hadn't wanted to risk the "freaks" finding out where he slept and so had shoved him in here upon his return. It was still the same impatient knock on the door though and the same shrill voice demanding he make breakfast. Then a different, definitely not normal, sound made itself known.

"Boy! What is that racket!?"

"It's the owl Hagrid gave me, Uncle Vernon. I think she's hungry, but I have no idea what to feed her."

"Get rid of it! We won't be having anymore freakish things around here! If it's not gone by this evening you'll be cooking us roasted owl for dinner. Imagine the nerve of those freaks adding another mouth to feed. ('Really his relatives were so unoriginal and unimaginative with their name calling abilities.') Our poor Dudders will end up starving if we let this continue. I will not have it!"

'Well that's that. So much for my first birthday gift.' Harry quietly wrote a quick note explaining to Hagrid that his uncle wouldn't allow him to keep a noisy pet, and sent the white owl off to find her new-former owner. It was no use fighting to keep her. Odds are she'd be dead before classes started if his uncle's facial coloring was anything to go by. It simply wasn't logical. Then again an owl wasn't really a logical first choice for a pet anyways. That's why he hadn't let himself get too attached to her. If he was going to risk having a pet, then he wanted one that could constantly stay close to him but was also able to survive on its own. A cat would be a much better choice. If it was small it could stay near or on his person at all times but could also hunt and climb out his window if danger (in the form of his relatives) was near.

It was then that a plan finalized itself in Harry's head. It had been in the works since he'd first seen his very own mountain of gold in his very own vault. Time to prepare himself for this new world he was entering! Step 1: Escape the Dursley's. Step 2: Go see his bank account manager. Step 3: Go get a quiet pet/companion that the Dursley's won't ever notice. Step 4: Explore Diagon Alley properly. A simple plan, yet oh so daunting.

'Well here goes nothing.'

"Uncle Vernon, Hagrid told me that Dudley's pig's tail will last longer with a wizard around him." The tail had been Hagrid's retaliation on his cousin for eating Harry's birthday cake.

"GET OUT! I don't want to see you ever again! You hear me Freak!?! Stay far away from us! And don't you dare breathe a word about us to your other freaks, or I'll drown you like I should have when we first found you dumped on our doorstep ten years ago! You think those freaks care about you? If they did, wouldn't they have taken better care of you than to toss you away first chance they got?" Uncle Vernon was an interesting shade of purple by the end of his diatribe.

"Yes sir. I'll leave now, sir" was the demure reply. Harry was used to such nasty comments from his relatives by this point in his life. He had sent all feelings that reared their head at such statements to

the deepest part of his mind's ocean and left them there. 'Still, he does bring up an interesting thought. Why was I left here if I'm hailed as such a hero...HMMMMM. I'll have to think more on that later.'

"You bet your life you'll leave."

With that Harry was unceremoniously yanked by his collar and flung out the front door. However, getting from Surrey to London was where the true challenge lay. Also, he needed to do something about his scar. He slipped out back behind the garden shed to wait for the Dursleys to leave for whatever summer activity they had planned for the day. A few hours later he was running down the street with enough of Dudley's allowance to pay for his train ride and the swiped baseball cap he'd grabbed on the way out pulled down low over his eyes. Step 1 is complete. Success!

****Several Hours Later at Gringotts Wizarding Bank****

"I would like to see my account manager please" said in the usual quiet demure voice.

"Key, please" said with a voice that indicated the "please" wasn't really meant at all.

Harry was led down the hallway to a back office where another grouchy looking goblin stared over his glasses at him impatiently. 'Maybe they aren't getting enough greens?'

"I am Axebreaker, the Potter account manager for the last 3 generations. Now, what is it I can help you with today, Mr. Potter, which you couldn't have come to me with yesterday?"

"I am here because I wanted to get all information you might have for me about my vault. I would like to know what the limit is that I can take out per year along with how much is in there in the first place. Also, do you have a copy of my parents will? I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm new to the world of magic and am trying to get my bearings."

"Is that so? Hard to believe the Savior of the Wizarding world would be so ill instructed. Alas you have come to the right place Mr. Potter, but if we're going to answer your questions then you will make it worth my time and go through the proper procedures. Understood young wizard?"

"Yes sir."

"Right. Then first you will do a blood test to prove you are who you say you are as keys can be passed around when one isn't looking. This test will also show your inheritance and give us an assessment of your magic. Place 7 drops of blood on this piece of parchment. No more, no less! Then I will cast the appropriate goblin-only magic on the parchment, after which we will have to wait 7 minutes in order for the results to be revealed. Understood?"

"Yes sir."

Seven drops of blood can reveal so many enlightening things, truly. The goblin had sat stunned for an entire minute after reading the

results before he ushered Harry out of his office and back to the roller coaster he had been on the day before.

"I will gather the needed files and paperwork before going over the findings of this test in detail with you. In the meantime I want you to retrieve the Inheritance Bag in the back of your vault which you, for some unfathomable reason, left behind yesterday. Merlin knows Dumbledore has tried to get his hands on it and your gold often enough! As if I would let him at anything in one of the vaults I oversee. Ridiculous! That would besmirch my honor as a goblin. Now off with you and meet me back in my office in 15 minutes on the dot. Understood?"

'He sure does seem to like that word an awful lot. I never even saw a bag in the vault. It's not like I left it on purpose! If it's mine I want it with me, or at least to know what it is. I've hardly had anything to call my own in my entire life. There is no WAY I would have left it. It's because Hagrid kept rushing me even then. On a side note...he sure doesn't seem to have the same almighty opinion of Dumbledore that I've heard so far. Yet another thing to think on later.' Harry noted his internal voice was starting to sound a bit grouchy which was interesting in itself. He had thought he'd put that feeling in his mind's ocean as well. 'Hmmmmmm. Something to check on later. Things are starting to pile up now. Good grief...what kind of grief is good? Oh bother. Focus Harry! We've got work to do!'

"Yes sir."

Fifteen minutes later he was back in the office looking through the test results with interest.

* * *

><p>Full Name: Hadrian James Evans Potter Peverell Gryffindor nee Pendragon

Paternal Parent: James Potter

Maternal Parent: Lily Potter nee Evans

Inheritance:

Gryffindor nee Pendragon (paternal)

Family magic: Dragon magics (last seen in Arthur Pendragon)

Title: Dragon Lord (in-acted if dragon magics is found in a descendant), gives magical kingship over Magical Britain

Heirloom(s): Excalibur/Sword of Gryffindor, Dragon Egg, and Pendragon Family Grimoire

Property: Camelot/Hogwarts

Vault: 1

Peverell (paternal)

Family magic: Natural affinity to death and soul magic.

Heirloom(s): Cloak of Invisibility and Peverell Family Grimoire

Property: None

Vault: 7

Potter (paternal)

Family magic: Fairy pixie born with the baby in his or her fist. This pixie will generally hide in the magical core of their child to strengthen him or her during times of duress.

Heirloom(s): Potter Ear-cuffs and Potter Family Grimoire

Property: National Monument Potter Cottage in Godric's Hollow (may be reclaimed)

Vault: 103

Evans (maternal)

Family magic: Clean muggleborn/squib-line magic purposed in reawakening old family magic if united with one of them

Heirloom(s): Trace Removal Crystal, Mind-Clearing Crystal, and Evans Family Grimoire

Property: None

Vault: 713 (currently Harry Potter's Trust Vault)

Magic Assessment:

Magical Core - 40% Blocked by Dumbledore

Stressed. Take immediate action to avoid temporary magical exhaustion and future long term stunted magical core growth and control.

Parasitic fragment. Currently contained in foreign magical barrier pressing on outer core. Take immediate action to avoid future possession and stunted magical core growth.

Death and Soul Magic - 100% Blocked by Dumbledore

Pixie - Fully Merged with Core.

* * *

><p>"Well Mr. Potter, it seems we have much to discuss. In the interest of good relations and full disclosure, I think you should be aware that Headmaster Albus Dumbledore has been actively trying to get his hands on your Inheritance Bag, which you will find contains all your Heirlooms, along with the gold in your trust fund which is

the only vault he is aware of you having in your possession. He has been doing this by claiming he is your Magical Guardian. This, of course, is a lie as your legal Magical Guardian is Sirius Black, Lord of the Black family and believed betrayer of the Potter family. He incidentally is now residing in Azkaban. The reason he is still considered your legal magical guardian is because he was put in Azkaban without a trial and, therefore, without a conviction of his crime. Gringotts will always follow the law, and therefore, only a legal magical guardian will be able to access any of your information, items, or goods which are protected here. I would still suggest you get emancipated as soon as you possibly can. Any questions so far?"<p>

"What is Azkaban?" 'Ha! I have about 1,000 questions! But I don't have the time for 1,000 answers today! Does this mean the King Arthur and the Round Table legends are real? I'm just not going to deal with that whole thing at the moment. Plenty of time later for that Earth shattering revelation. Yep. Later.'

"It is the wizarding prison where criminals are held. Now, as to your Inheritance Bag, I would strongly recommend keeping its contents to yourself and in a safe, secure place. As some of them may come in useful on a semi-regular basis I would not recommend your vault."

"I see. Thank you for this information."

"Don't worry. You are being charged for the blood test and my time." Axebreaker gave a sinister grin.

"I see. Well in that case I have a question about the Crystals from the Evans inheritance."

"Ah yes. You will learn that there are some wizards out there that can perform invasive mind magics. It would seem that your mother has created the Mind-Clearing Crystal in order to counter this. As for the Trace Removal Crystal, I believe your family was in hiding when they were killed. It would make sense she would try to create a crystal to remove tracking spells among other things."

"Mind magics!? As in they can control your thoughts and will?" Now Harry was really considering whether this new world was worth it. The evil that he knew versus the evil that he didn't know—how annoying. Not that it seemed he had much choice in the matter. After all, the Dursley's negative response hadn't had any impact on whether or not he would attend Hogwarts, once Hagrid had arrived. "Is there anything else they can do to control you? How will I know if I'm being controlled? Will I be able to do anything to stop it?"

Axebreaker gave Harry a greedy looking smirk. "Yes, Mr. Potter, there are ways to be alerted to these kinds of threats. Allow me to show you some Goblin-made wares that are just for such a dilemma." Step 2 is complete. Success! 'Blah. Now I have to add a few more steps though, like some way to secure to store my Inheritance Bag. Maybe a stronger trunk? Dudley will probably bust the second-hand trunk Hagrid had me get in no time.' [sigh]

____**Back to the Present between Platforms 9&10**____

Harry fingered the Mind Ring that now adorned his thumb. On his right index finger a similar Potion Ring resided, and around his neck hung

the last piece of Goblin-made jewelry he had purchased that day, a Charm Necklace. The necklace carried his shrunken charm-trunk and a keychain holding his vault key, trunk key, and the key to the Dursley's back door. (He had swiped it back when he was 7 and had been locked out of the house for 3 days straight.) The necklace itself was invisible to all but himself and could only be removed by himself. It was charmed unbreakable and dragontongue (now that turned out to be a handy inheritance once he figured out he could speak it) password protected. The goblins were truly ingenious! The Potion Ring would heat up when a potion is in the food you are holding, and the stone turns from clear to violet for a love potion, black for a loyalty potion, or orange for a truth potion. The Mind Ring also heats up when mind magic is cast on you and the stone will turn from clear to green for a compulsion charm, yellow for a confundus charm, and red for an obliviate. He would never regret the decision to purchase these expensive safeguards.

'Ah! Finally! Looks like this group is heading to Hogwarts as well.' Harry watched a pack of red headed people bustle by him. One of the older boys had an owl cage balanced on his trolley and the mother was loudly going on about muggles and such. He quickly followed after them and watched them run through a brick pillar. 'No wonder I had no idea what to do! Then again, considering the entrance to Diagon Alley, I should have guessed something like this.' With an annoyed sigh Harry walked over to the wall and leaned against it slightly to make sure he could pass through. In the end, his lean almost turned into a full-out fall he just barely caught himself from.

In front of him was the Hogwarts Express huffing and puffing in all its steam-engine glory. Harry gave a tiny smile then, with a spring in his step, he was off to find a seat. 'I'm off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of warts. Because, because, because, because! Because of the manipulative things he does!' [dry chuckle]

3. Ch 2: To flee, or not to flee

Hey readers, thank you so much for your encouraging comments! :)

I understand the issues with prologue labeling, but I really don't like combining the Prologue with Chapter 1, so I'll leave it the way it is. Thanks for the thought though.

Also, I know James died for Lily and Harry. I just personally don't like James very much, so I argue that Harry could brush it off as his father dying for Lily and not necessarily Harry, where as Lily died for no one but Harry. (Some what childish I know, please forgive me!)

"Conversations"

'Internal Monologues'

~Dragontongue~

[Action]

* * *

><p>Chapter 2: To flee or not to fleeâ€|that is the question.<p>

As Harry was looking for an empty compartment to hide away in, he was knocked into two of the red-headed horde he'd followed through the barrier. They appeared to be identical...all except their expressions. He remembered them shouting something about exploding a toilet and sending the lid to the one who appeared to be their little sister. The mother had had a shrill response to that promise. On closer examination, there did seem to be a slight discrepancy between the mirror images. One looked at him like he was considering Harry's unknown, but possibly useful, talents; while the other looked at him like he was thinking of Harry's unknown, but possibly inspiring, weaknesses. It was the eyes that gave it all away. However, both were undoubtedly and equally terrifying!

'Double double, Toil and Trouble; hair burns and laughter bubbles.' Harry would definitely be giving Toil and Trouble plenty of space and hopefully wouldn't draw their attention again.

"Why hello there"

"Little fellow student."

'Are you seriously calling someone little right to their face!' Harry mentally cut into the twins' back and forth dialogue.

"You don't look"

"Familiar, therefore,"

"You must be a first year."

"I am Forge, and this is"

"His esteemed brother, Gred!"

"Did you need our assistance" Toil and Trouble...now named Forge and Gred spoke the last in synch.

'I think I'm sticking with Toil and Troubleâ€|.It just suits them so much better' Harry decided.

"No. I was just looking for a place to sit. Sorry for bumping you. Excuse me." Harry tried to make a quick escape.

"Not a worry"

"None indeed!"

"However, you haven't yet"

"Introduced yourself, now have you?"

Harry winced. He really didn't want to deal with the pub "cornered prey" experience all over again. He needed to be short but polite with these two. As forgettable as possible. Right.

"I'm Harry. Nice to meet you." A quick half smile and duck into a conveniently empty compartment next to themâ€|. 'Whew. That could have been a disaster. I've been here, what, five minutes so far? Not a good sign Harry!' Sometimes his internal voice liked stating the most

obvious things.

As the train gave a jerk and then a shrill whistle, Harry took a seat by the window and opened the pet bed pocket on his bag. After carefully reaching in and retrieving a sleeping EmberLight, he slowly ran his fingers over her soft ebony hide. Even in this form, she had the scattering of tiny splashes of gold and crimson making her coat resemble dying embers in a fireplace, bringing warmth and comfort to what would otherwise be a cold dark room. EmberLight was currently sporting the form of a small kitten which could easily fit in the pocket of his zip up hoodie. No one would ever suspect she was a dragon hatched from the egg in his Inheritance Bag.

The Potter Ear-cuffs had turned out to be Metamorph Ear-cuffs. All you had to do was tap the cuff while saying a password and imagining what you wish to look like, and wham, you were just as you imagined! After researching a bit more in the Potter Family Grimoire, he'd found they worked on animals too. So when EmberLight had hatched and his initial panic had settled, they had both pierced high on their left ears and permanently added the cuffs to their attire. He would never enter Diagon Alley as Harry Potter ever again! As dragons were most certainly NOT on the list of pets allowed in Hogwarts, he had asked her to change into a small kitten during the school year. To his shock, she had agreed...in ENGLISH. Well, it turned out to be dragontongue. Diving into the Pendragon Family Grimoire had explained this was part of the dragon magics Harry had apparently inherited according to the goblin blood test. It certainly came in handy, what with having a dragon newly born and a ton of passwords to set on everything.

'Hm, but I do need to find out where my Invisibility Cloak and Excalibur disappeared to.' According to Axebreaker, they might have still been in use before his parent's deaths and, therefore, didn't make it into the bag. However, they belonged to Harry and should have been brought to the goblins to store in the vault till Harry had come to claim them again. It kinda irked him to know he owned something but had no idea where it was. It was like an annoying itch or, better yet, kind of an unsettled wind blowing his mind's ocean into a frenzy.

Thankfully, the goblins had been able to remove the blocks on his magic. It'd felt like taking off a belt that was cinched too tight to breath. With the admonishment not to allow Dumbledore to do such things again in the future (because he had clearly given permission for the current ones...) he had been pushed out the door to fend for himself. As it turned out, the added step of 'Purchase Secure Trunk' to his master plan had been a stroke of genius, if Harry didn't say so himself. Now there was a wizard he truly and honestly thought was AMAZING. The things that man could do with wood were inspiring.

____**Flashback to the Trunk Shop after the Visit to Gringotts**____

A bell dinged softly when Harry pushed the door to the shop open.

"I'll be right up. Have a look around!" A voice called from the back of the building. The room was bigger on the inside than the outside; this seemed common among magical shops. However, that was where the norm ended. This shop was wonderful! It was organized with rows of

different chests neatly in line with an assortment of bags hanging tidily on the walls. It felt spacious and smelled of wood and leather, kind of earthy. Harry carefully ran his hand over the wood part of the nearest trunk as he gazed around. Love at first sight. No doubt about it.

"Now, how can I help you, lad?"

"I need a secure trunk. I'm going to school soon and I live with my muggle cousin who has sticky fingers, if you know what I mean."

"Ah! I've had that sort of request before. You have come to the right place young man! I offer everything from security trunks all the way to complete travelodge trunks."

"Excuse me, did you say a travelodge trunk?"

"Why indeed I did lad. We're wizards now aren't we? Of course there's such a thing as traveling in style and comfort here!"

This statement made Harry give a rare chuckle. "That's true. So do you do custom trunks? How much would it run?"

"Why that would depend on your needs, lad. I am a magi-carpenter, so I think I'll be able to take proper care of you! Name's Ethan Bond. Now follow me to where the magic happens!" With a wink and a gesture they had proceeded to the back of the store where Harry witnessed the designing of his custom specialty trunk and linked bag combo. It was a moment he would cherish for the rest of his life. It was this purchase which allowed him to create his own bit of freedom in the otherwise stifling or hostile worlds he lived in.

Two hours later Harry was exiting the shop with his Inheritance Bag still over his shoulder and a receipt in hand. The eagerly awaited trunk and bag would be ready in three days.

* * *

><p>Bag'em & Box'em

Receipt for Specialty Trunk and Linked Bag Combo

_Trunk: black with brushed nickel hardware and dragon shaped padlock, 7 compartments, linked to Bag, shrinkable to charm size.

>* Compartment 1: School supplies linked to school case in trunk (4)

and to bag
* Compartment 2: Wardrobe linked to wardrobe in trunk (4) and is twice the shown size provided by sliding compartments

>* Compartment 3: Treasures (extra dragontongue password protected)

linked to trunk (4)
* Compartment 4: Home (extra warding including silencing) spiral staircase, desk, school supply unit, bookshelves, fireplace, daybed, wardrobe, side-table/treasure chest, sink/kitchen area, toilet and bathing room, links to trunk (1-3)

>* Compartment 5: Potion Lab (extra warding including silencing)
*

Compartment 6: Dueling Chamber (extra warding including silencing)

>* Compartment 7: Front Door Portal (step in and open door to your house, be sure to close the lid behind you and summon your trunk once back in your house) not in use till owner has house to connect it to.

_Bag: medium brown with brushed nickel dragon shaped clasps and zipper tabs, 3 main compartments, linked to Trunk, shrinkable to charm size.

>* Flap Pocket
* Pet bed pocket expanded to the size of a den but will change to size needed by pet(s) occupying it.

>* Inner Pockets
* Main compartment 1: linked to the bookshelf in the trunk (1)

>* Main compartment 2: linked to bottom potion supply shelf in trunk (1)

>* Main compartment 3: linked to trunk (3) with same extra dragon tongue password protection
* Notes pocket: linked to notes shelf in trunk (1)

>* Outer Pockets
* Preservation food pocket (bag back)

>* Misc pocket (bag front emergency potions, nail clips, etc)

>* Writing supplies pocket: linked to drawer in trunk

(1)
_

_Additional Features

>* Shrink/expand on dragon tongue password and finger touch/magic signature

>* Unbreakable, preservation, feather light
* Magic signature summonable in dragon tongue

>

_Additional Security

>* Fire, water, summon, banish, theft (shocks strangers who touch it) charm protected

_ * Muggle notice-me-not charm _

_ * Dragon tongue password protected _

_ * __Key for trunk _

_Total: 731 Galleons _

Thank you for your business! Please remember our life-time guarantee of our work should anything happen to your purchases.

_Salesman, Owner, and Magi-carpenter Ethan Bond _

* * *

><p>****Back to the Present****

The door to Harry's compartment slammed open.

"Can I sit here? The rest of the train is full."

"Sure." 'No.'

"I'm Ron. What's your name?"

'Yet another appears from the "Red Horde."' Harry gave an internal snicker.

"Harry."

"Are you Harry Potter?"

"...Yesâ€|"

"That's brilliant! Would you mind showing me, you know, the scar?" Ron said with a gesture to Harry's forehead.

"No." 'Honestly, who goes around asking to gawk at other's scars?'

"Oh, why not? You're famous you know? Do remember anything from that night?"

'Is this guy serious? "Hi, do you remember your parents being murdered in front of you? Nice to meet you!" Unbelievable!'

"That's private."

"What's witâ€|" Saved by the door, which was once again slammed open.

"I heard Harry Potter would be on the train. Have you seen him?" A blonde boy stood in the doorway with his nose up in the most uncomfortable looking manner.

"He's right here. What do you want?"

It would seem Red doesn't like Blonde, slightly interesting factoid. 'Honestly though, what is this? Potter, oh Potter! Wherefore art thou Boy-Who-Lived?'

"I'm Malfoy. Draco Malfoy." Ron gave snicker. "Think my name's funny, do you? No need to ask your name. Second hand clothes, red hair, more children than they can afford. You must be a Weasley. My father's told me all about your type. Potter, you will soon see that some families are better than others. I can help you with that." Draco extended his hand towards Harry.

"Don't take his hand Harry! He's nothing but a slimy Slytherin! They're all evil dark wizards in that house!"

"Really, is that so." Harry spoke softly and reached out to take Draco's hand. "Thanks for the offer, Draco, but I don't tend to put much store by 'family reputation,' fortunately for you. It was nice to meet you. Please excuse me." The Red and the Blonde were left speechlessly watching the retreating back of Black with Ember kitten perched staring at them from his shoulder.

~When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning, or rain? When the hurlyburly's done, when this train ride's lost and goneâ€| Hopefully.~ [sigh]

~What's a Hurlyburly?~ EmberLight brought her attention back to Harry.

~Your guess is as good as mine.~

He slipped into another compartment that seemed to only have one other occupant. "Would you mind if I sit in here? My compartment got invaded with some feuding hair color proteges." 'What the bloody hell am I saying that sort of thing out loud for!? I never say anything like that out loud!'"

The chubby boy took a moment to process his words while Harry considered heading right back out the door. "You must mean a Red and Blonde? Maybe a Weasley and Malfoy? At least I think there is a Malfoy starting this yearâ€¦ Um nevermind. S-sure you can sit here if y-you want to. I'm Neville L-longbottom" He'd started out so strong but lost steam halfway through. He looks so nervous.

"I want to. And yes, I was talking exactly about Red and Blonde!" 'I honestly can't believe he figured that out so quick.' Harry gave Neville an unsure smile. 'I know, I know! Don't trust anyone. But, there is something about himâ€¦' "Toad!"

"Trevor!"

That was how Toad Trevor was denied his first out of many escape plans. Harry listened in amusement as EmberLight Kitten gave Trevor Toad a hissed dressing down for having the presumption of bothering her Little Lord. It was another benefit to choosing a cat disguiseâ€¦ No one would notice a kitten occasionally hissing or growling at Harry! And no one would be able to tell the difference between a dragon's hisses and growls (which were considerably higher pitched coming from this small body) and a kitten's...unless they spoke felinetales he supposedâ€¦ That would have to be a bridge they crossed if or when they found it.

~I'm not all that little! Especially compared to the size of a kitten that fits in the palm of my hand! And really, how has the toad bothered me? All I was doing was stopping it from running away through the door **I** had open.~ Harry had given up on changing 'Little Lord' to anything else. Apparently, even though Dragon Lord was a human wizard title, it was the actual name all dragons he would come in contact with would know him by no matter how much he complained. It was simply out of all of their hands, as EmberLight had informed him.

~This is not my real size even though you are the same as always! Besides, I'm going to be the size of your daybed when I'm full grown and be the perfect mount and guardian, so it's a moot point. On the other hand, that overgrown toad had the audacity to run at your feet! He could have infected with you with warts!~

~Through my trainers?~ Harry rolled his eyes in exasperation.

~He could have gotten slime all over your new foot and leg scales!~

~You are slightly ridiculous you know.~

~I am just taking care of you, Little Lord. It's obvious someone needs to, and it is my duty and utmost pleasure to fill that role. After all, I love you, Little Lord.~

~Ember, You are the fire in my cold dark lifeâ€¦~ Harry gave her a soothing scratch where her wings were hidden. He still couldn't bring himself to say he loved her too. To love anyone or anything was to sign the death warrant on the said loving relationship. A torn up baby blanket, a betraying "friend," a disappointed teacher in his apparent lying compulsion, all gave testimony to the fact that Harry wasn't to be blessed with any sort of caring or loving relationship

of any kind. Yes, the Dursley's had been the cause of these ruthlessly crushed, fragile hopes, but they must hate him for some reason. They simply couldn't retain the energy to keep hating for so long if it wasn't fueled by something. It wouldn't make sense. He himself could barely retain the energy to be angry for a few days unless it was a major happening.

The two boys sat quietly in their compartment relaxing in the afternoon sun and drifted off into their perspective thoughts. For some reason, it never occurred to Harry to hide his dragontongue abilities from Neville. For some reason, it never occurred to Neville to be surprised or to report Harry's dragontongue abilities to anyone.

****Flashback Dursley's after the Trunk Shop****

While waiting to pick up his trunk, Harry had spent the days sequestered in Dudley's second bedroom or out shopping in muggle clothing stores. Axebreaker had offered him a Gringotts Gold Bag that was magically tied to his vault along with exchanging some galleons into pounds, all for a fee, of course. He was relatively free to leave the house, for once in his life, due to his family still being terrified by the pig's tail event. He'd even managed to buy himself a complete muggle wardrobe replacement. All of the shopping bags were stashed hidden under the bed at the moment. He would leave the current trunk he had in his cupboard in case he needed it someday.

It was AMAZING how good clothes could feel! Really, Harry had never (as far as he could remember) experienced properly fitting clothes of any sort. The Dursley's had refused to dress a freak above his station, so Dudley's giant hand-me-downs had been his choice of attire these past ten years. However, he was now the proud owner of a completed checklist of everything he could possibly think of needing for his present and future attire.

* * *

><p>*1 dark red winter beanie (forehead cover)

*1 brown beret (forehead cover)

*1 long sleeve white dress shirt

*2 sweaters (rust/light grey)

*10 short sleeve t-shirts (white/grey/dark red/dark green/black)

*10 long sleeve t-shirts (white/grey/dark red/dark green/black)

*2 print shirts (one with a dragon and one with a lily both wrapping around the torso)

*1 zip up green hoodie

*1 grey winter coat

*1 pair of black dress trousers

*1 pair of dark tan khakis trousers
*1 pair of dark blue jeans
*1 pair of medium blue jeans
*1 pair of chore/work jeans (cheapest found)
*1 pair of khaki shorts
*1 pair of red swim trunks
*1 pair of red & black plaid flannel pajama bottoms
*10 black pants
*10 pairs of white socks
*5 pairs of black dress socks
*1 pair of black dress shoes
*1 pair of brown leather converse trainers
*1 pair brown flip flops
* * *

><p>Harry carefully cradled the dragon egg from the Inheritance Bag in his arms. He'd taken it out when he got back to Surrey after Gringotts. Something about the egg was irresistible. He simply needed to keep it as close as possible, so it stayed in his arms while he curled up on the old broken down bed in Dudley's second bedroom every night.

****The Next Morning****

The day finally arrived, Harry headed back to London to pick up his new trunk and bag. The magi-carpenter even suggested getting a wand arm-holster (invisible, unsummonable, unbreakable) at Ollivander's while he was out and about. On the way home, Harry picked up the last of the wizarding part of his wardrobe (outside of the school supply list of dragonhide herbology gloves, basic button-up shirt and tie Hogwarts uniform, and three plain black school robes). All he had ordered were some dragonhide black winter gloves, a black hooded heavy winter cape, a black formal dress robe (growth charmed), a medium brown light hooded casual open robe (trench coat styled), and one pair of dragon hide black winter boots. There were warming charms placed on all the winter outdoor clothing.

While trying to complete Step 3: Go get a quiet pet/companion that the Dursley's won't ever notice, Harry wandered into the Magical Menagerie. There, he found a strange egg that the owner complained wouldn't hatch despite it still having a living inhabitant. Harry decided to buy the egg because it felt like it was something he had lost and finally found. He then headed straight back to Surrey with plans of living in his new trunk as much as possible until classes started. Back in Dudley's second bedroom, he found the dragon egg from his Inheritance Bag was cracking open.

****Back to Present Waiting to be Sorted****

The children had been herded from train to boat to a never-ending staircase, and now down the great hall under a beautiful, twinkling night sky. (Which was not the REAL sky mind you. Some girl had read it somewhere, and it was important not to confuse REAL with UNREAL.) An odd old hat sang a song, then what appeared to be the sorting process began.

'Oh brilliant. "Alright kids line up. Time for your life-time box and label event. If you weren't already nervous, we have provided a (free of charge) sense of general panic by having said event witnessed by a mass amount of complete, yet attentive, strangers. Should you somehow mysteriously fail (at what exactly is up to your imagination to fill in), said strangers will be sure to respond appropriately as the immature adolescents they are." Right. Well these are the trials of mankind I suppose.'

There was a long list of names, then "Longbottom, Neville." Harry gave the boy next to him a slight nod of encouragement and he was off. After a few moments of tense (on Neville's part) waiting, "Gryffindor!" was yelled out. Well, that was what the boy had wanted. He'd mentioned it while they were snacking on some jumping chocolate during the train ride. 'Good for him.'

More cheers. More names. Finally, "Potter, Harry." After checking to make sure EmberLight was safely hidden in his robe pocket (the rest of his life's possessions hung as a reassuring weight on the chain around his neck), Harry headed for the three legged stool. 'Oh! Add on a balancing act to the prior tirade!'

'Ok. Let's go for Ravenclaw. It's my only chance at being left alone. Ravenclaw, Ravenclaw, Ravenclaw' Harry kept chanting it as the hat settled on his head and something dropped uninvited right into his mind's forest just outside his cottage.

'Oh my. Now this is unexpected.'

'What the bloody hell is going on!?' HP

'Oh it's just me, the hat.' And the hat was promptly torn off his head.

"Mr. Potter, is there a problem?" Professor McGonagall (previous child-herder extraordinaire) asked.

"Yes ma'am, the hat was trying to invade my head!"

"That's how it sorts you. Now put it back on and let it do its job, Mr. Potter!"

Harry was seething when the rim was once more lowered over his eyes. 'STAY OUT! YOU ARE NOT WELCOME HERE!'

'Now, now no need to get angry child, I am bound to not tell any secrets I may find and I need to sort somehow right? Besides, you have the most beautiful mind I've seen in a very very long time.'

'No! This is my mind. My world. My refuge. You will not enter here. Put me in Ravenclaw and be done with it!' HP

'Child what has got you so worked up? Never have I had such a reaction as yours... Ah! Forgive me! I did not realize to whom I was speaking. As you will, my king. And may I say, welcome home, Sire. We have been anxiously awaiting the return of the King these past thousand years.'

'Wait!' All of Harry's wrath and determination to expel the intruding hat turned quickly into all out panic. 'This is a secret I don't want known! I have no intention of being anyone's king. Swear you won't tell anyone. Swear it!'

'As you will my king. As I said before, I am already bound to not reveal the secrets of those I sort. But may I inquire as to why you will not take up your rightful throne and duty?'

'I have ****not**** been impressed with this new world. Outside of a simply amazing magi-carpenter, I have found no one worth the effort it would take to rule these people. I was practically assaulted by a mob in a pub. The newspaper and literature have left much to be desired for anyone trying to figure this backwards community out. I know that I've only skimmed the surface, but so far I have only felt foreboding in my gut. For all I know, these people could turn on me as easily as all the normals, I mean muggles, have. I tend to not open myself up to those kinds of threats anymore.'

'I see. This is your decision to make, but your title still stands with Hogwarts herself and me as well no matter if you claim the throne or not. If you need anything, my King, anything at all, be sure to ask me. Now, may I say, sire, even if the glimpse was stolen, it was a theft well worth it for me to see a mindscape such as your own. However I have to ask, why Ravenclaw? I would suggest Slytherin. You will be great you know, and Slytherin will help you on your way.'

'Slytherin would draw too much negative attention. I don't know what their reputation was when Hogwarts began, but now they are all considered evil. They also, apparently, consist of a lot of the murderer of my family's followers which is fairly dangerous considering the tools at the disposal of the children in this school. Also, I honestly didn't even see it as an optionâ€¦ I mean tell me, where is this ambition you're seeing? I'm generally considered pretty apathetic. Gryffindor is also not a good choice as I already have too much attention as The-Boy-Who-Lived. I thought about putting together a "hero" set of mind clothes as I've already seen some of the expectation for it. I'll probably have to create something of a set as it is, but I will tone it down from people's hyped up fantasies. Hufflepuffs are too pack-oriented. You see I've done my research. Ravenclaw is the place where I'll get the most peace and quiet while I figure out this new world.'

'You already show yourself to be wise, my young King. You may be apathetic towards other humans, but you have a curiosity towards other things. Slytherin is not just ambition, though you do have the strong ambition to be left alone. It is also about cunning which you also have shown to achieve your ambition! You are brave, but you will not rush headlong to your demise. Yes, I understand your choice. It is an appropriate place for you as well, as I can see you have spent

long periods of time reading and pursuing knowledge in the muggle libraries. Indeed, your vocabulary is alarmingly advanced for one your age. Farewell for now my King. Do seek me out again someday. Let it be' "Ravenclaw!"

Harry made his way to the Ravenclaw table to the sound shocked politely unenthusiastic applause.

'To flee or not to flee, that is the question:

Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer

The Slings and Arrows of an outrageous fate,

Or to be Gryffindor against a Sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep

No more; and by a sleep, to say we are free.'

Harry stared up at the enchanted ceiling in quiet contemplation. A beautiful forest of giant trees surrounded him. In Front of him stood his mind's two-story stone cottage with crowning tower. It was perched surrounded, in place of a castle's moat, by the ocean of emotions. This was his imaginary world (his mindscape the hat had called it?) he had created over the many years of mental, emotional, and, sometimes, physical abuse he had suffered at the hands of his relatives. This was his refuge. A set of clothes flew from the cottage to land in his hand. [sigh] The-Boy-Who-Lived...what rot! Harry quietly donned the Ravenclaw tie, dark red button-up long sleeve shirt, and black school robes which would depict his confidence, leadership, and self-sacrificing personality traits respectively. Why, oh why, was he doing this? He remembered one of the framed pictures that hung in the bedroom of the cottage. It showed a certain, peaceful graveyard. A place he would rest in the real world, someday.

'Not yet.'

4. Ch 3: The Phantom of the Dungeon

Disclaimer: I do not own The Phantom of the Opera, any Shakespeare Plays used in Chapter 2, or the Wizard of Oz. All direct or partial quotes from these belong to the authors respectively.

"Conversation"

'Internal Monologue'

~Dragontongue~

[Action]

* * *

><p>Chapter 3: The Phantom of the Dungeon<p>

When a cat turned into a teacher, and said teacher threatened to turn

a tardy student into a pocket watch, Harry was sure the first few weeks of class would prove to be Harry in Wonderland.

'I suppose it's appropriate. I do feel like I've gone down a rabbit hole into a different world. It's just my luck. I never liked that story. It always seemed so unsettling what with everything spiraling out of control.' [forlorn sigh]

~You really need to hurry up and bond with me, Little Lord. How am I ever to know what is causing your mood or what you are thinking if I'm not able to connect with your mind?' EmberLight nudged at his ear from her shoulder perch, as if she could physically climb into his head.

~It's not like I'm trying to avoid the bond you know. I just honestly am not sure how to connect with you on that level yetâ€|. The thought of it scares me.~

~I know Little Lord. I'll wait for you though.~ That earned the Ember kitten a kiss on the top of its head.

~Well, I was just thinking of the transfiguration classes if you must know. I wonder, how hard do you think it is to turn someone into a working watch?~

~Someone not dragonkin?~

~Of course! Dragonkin are far too mighty and regal to be a pocket watch!~ Harry smirked as EmberLight nodded her head in agreement a bit too early. ~They'd at least be a grandfather clock!~

~We're not to be degraded to clocks at all!~ Harry couldn't hold back his snicker any longer. ~Oh, you take such delight in vexing me!~

During Ember kitten's stream of little kitten growls, Neville appeared from a side hall and joined him on the way towards the Great Hall for a late lunch.

"Hi Harry. Hello EmberLightâ€| [kitten/dragon eyes glare] Have I interrupted something? I-I mean, a-are you headed for lunch?" Neville gave Harry an unsure look.

'He crumbled halfway again. I wonder why? He was fine by the end of the train rideâ€|' Harry carefully observed Neville's face and body language.

"Have they been bullying you in Gryffindor?"

"What!?"

"You look unsure of yourself again. All hunched over, like when we first met. It's fine if you're by my side...we've already established that on the train, so what has got you all worked up and insecure again?"

Neville eyed Harry for a moment before replying. "I see. Yes, we did establish that I suppose. Though it was never said, so I guess I was worried that I was imagining it. Gryffindor is fine. So far it's just loud and they don't seem to be interested in being friends with me

yet. But it's still just the beginning of the year. We'll just have to wait and see."

"Why on earth would I come out and say something like that. You'll be the one to leave anyways. No doubt about it. Anyways, Ember was just mad that I teased her a bit. How are your classes going?"

"I'm not going anywhere. Classes are ok. I'm having a bit of trouble with the practical portions. You?"

"Relatively easy for relatively pointless spells. I mean, in reality, I'd probably be in need of a match more than a needle, and I doubt I'll have a needle handy when I'm matchless." [two heads nod] And that was the end of the conversation part of their walk to lunch— just comfortable silence until the parting of ways to their separate tables.

_____*_*_*_*Later that Week in Potions*_*_*_*____

The potions teacher made his own grand entrance, though in a way completely different than Professor McGonagall's cat to teacher shirade. The door banged in a loud obnoxious manner. No doubt this was to scare unsuspecting victims, or students. 'It also would draw a distinct line between teacher and students as I'm sure he's the type who'd give detentions to anyone else who slammed a door like that' Harry noted. Then it came to him in a flash of inspiration.

'Bloody hell! I've been in the wrong story!' That, however, was as far as that train of thought would be able to get for the moment.

"Mr—Potter, our new celebrity." Professor Snape was sneering down at Harry from the front of the room.

'Oh dear. Not a fan club member from the looks of it.' When Harry went to make respectful eye contact and affirm his notable presence in the classroom, he felt something scrape across his mind's forest as a grater would scrape across cheese.

What was with teachers trying to take walks through the students' minds!? Both Quirrell and now Snape had sent these bouts of invasiveness towards him within the first five minutes of class! Thankfully, the mist in his forest had been thickened since the hat experience, so he had been completely hidden. On the other hand, he had no idea how effective that would be long term. 'Nasty wizards... And their I go switching storylines again! It's scary how much they managed to unbalance my status quo. I hate this!'

After enduring Snape's attempts to humiliate him for his lack of knowledge, the class attempted to follow a recipe on a blackboard at the front of the dimly lit room. The Ravenclaws were together with Gryffindor for this class, so Neville and Harry had sat together near the back of the classroom in hopes of being overlooked as much as possible. Neville was practically shaking in fear of Snape and his awe inspiring swishing robes. It was no wonder, the man kept popping up right behind him (and coincidentally Harry as well) at the most inopportune times. Harry was having his own problems of not being able to see the board clearly from these seats. So, with that in mind, when Neville finally blew up— well blew up his cauldron and exploded in boils all over (Harry was actually thanking his own

Dudley-trained dodging instincts), he promptly informed Neville they'd be sitting in the front from that day onwards. That decision hadn't saved them from negative points, zeros for the day's practical, or Neville from the hospital wing.

EmberLight popped out of his pocket and onto his shoulder during the trip to the school nurse and had carefully looked Neville over.

~Little Lord, you best keep your distance. I think the Warlord has caught something dreadful! He smells and looks like he has an infection of rot.~

"She's worried about you." Harry answered Neville's questioning look. "Just focus on getting to the wing. Just a couple minutes longer and you'll be right as rain again."

"I got this, Harry. Just make sure I don't run into anything. I think I'm going blind. It's bloody painful!" Neville tried so hard to keep himself together. It was truly amazing how strong this boy could be when he stopped shaking in fear.

"You know, Neville, you are an odd person. You shake in fear from the threat of something happening, but you are strong as a rock when something actually does happen. Doesn't that lead to you not needing to shake in the first place? Clearly you can handle whatever a school will throw at an eleven year old."

Neville stopped and stared at Harry through his one good eye (the other had a boil forcing the lid to stay shut...ew). "You, Harry, are extraordinary. You're bloody brilliant. I'm going to stay by your side forever."

This declaration caused Harry to stare right back in equal shock. Then a look of terror flashed quickly across his face before it settled into an unreadable mask. "You won't. You lie. Here's the hospital wing. Get inside and stay there." This was stated in a cold monotone and was followed by an amazing disappearing act.

In a side hall a corridor down, Ember kitten and Harry were tucked into a bay window behind a heavy curtain.

~What did he say that has shaken my Little Lord so?~ EmberLight cuddled comfortably under his chin, but Harry tried to pull her away. ~Don't push me away right now. I'm just sitting here. It's ok...I won't hurt you Little Lord. Remember this summer? Remember how we stayed together and hid from those normals or muggles or whatever you want to call them? Remember how I didn't leave you even when you feared they'd hurt me? Or the school wouldn't accept me? We will find a way Little Lord. You and I. Now what did the Warlord say.~

~Why are you calling him Warlord.~

~Don't change the subject, Little Lord. It is his name the same as yours is your own.~ Ember bumped his chin lightly with her chin in admonishment.

~He said he'd stay by my side forever. He's a liar. And Cruel! I never thought he'd be capable of that.~ Harry trembled slightly and curled up just a bit tighter.

~Oh Little Lordâ€¦| Breathe little one. Just close your eyes for a few moments and breathe. I'm here nothing will harm you. Let the Warlord's matter be forgotten for now. Think of our home in the trunk. Think of all the things we did together last month. The movies and books we enjoyed. The worlds we dreamed up. Just breathe little one.~

And that's exactly what Harry did. Three minutes later his eye's snapped back open and his body relaxed.

~EmberLight! I almost forgot to tell you! During potions class I figured it out. This isn't Harry in Wonderland. It's the Phantom of the Dungeon! Snape is the perfect Phantom, swooping in and around rooms. Which is excellent! I really wanted to escape that rabbit hole story. So who is Christine? If he wasn't Snape's favorite, I would cast Draco as Carlotta...unfortunately it just wouldn't work. Draco just can't be Christineâ€¦| Well maybe. "Hmmmâ€¦| Hermione as Carlotta then? That might actually work...~

~No more talk of darkness, forget these wide eyed fears. I'm here, nothing can harm you, my breath will bake their raid!~ [evil laugh]

~Ember, darling, I adore you.~ Harry climbed to his feet, once more in total control of himself and the momentary fear dropped back into the depths of his mind's ocean.

'The phantom of the dungeons is there, inside your mind.' [dramatic sweep from curtained area]

_____*A Few Weeks Later*____

Harry had quickly taken to dragging Ember Kitten and, eventually, Neville to the library during any free time they had. He had informed them that, for all the belittling comments that were directed towards normals (he just couldn't think of them as 'muggles'), their school systems were far superior to the magical world's. Hogwarts was supposedly the best magical school in Europe. If this was true then it was no wonder that the magical world looked like a reenactment of the victorian age as he had originally thought. Besides charms and transfiguration, the classes were a complete waste of timeâ€¦| at least the actual professors of the classes were a waste.

As Harry put it to Neville on their second trip to the hospital wing, "Perhaps they should take a memory potion of some sort? Quirrell has forgotten how to speak. Snape has forgotten how to, oh, I don't know...teach? Binns forgot to actually die, or forgot that there was more to history than goblin rebellions. The flying instructor forgot to come to class with her own broom and has, apparently, also forgotten any and all safety procedures and spells for new flyers...things such as safe brooms, cushioning spells, levitation spells maybeâ€¦| I don't know, but I'm sure there was some way to stop you from falling three stories from a possessed broom. We're called BEGINNERS for a reason. All she did was whip out her wand and point it at you for a while, like somehow that would have magically stopped you. Did you hear her yelling at you to 'Stop!' and 'Get back down here!' because clearly you were in control." Harry stopped to catch his breath while Neville let out a little chuckle.

"You do have a point. It sort of blows my mind how terrible everything sounds when you put it like that."

"I know right!?"

'It's actually quite enjoyable to be able to say some of my rants out loud to someone else, be it dragon or human. Who knew anyone would appreciate them?' Harry and Neville fell into silent contemplation as the hospital wing came into view.

Harry had finally allowed Neville to appear by his side three days after the last hospital wing incident. No comment had been made about the previous conversation. They had simply fell into step on the way to lunch again as if nothing had happened. However, Neville had been cautious not to scare Harry off again. He would simply stay at Harry's side without drawing attention to the fact that he was there. Eventually, Harry would come to expect him there and trust him to be there long term. For now though, just quietly keeping him company would be enough. Harry was his first friend and the first person to actually look at him and see him as more than he himself even knew. Harry was special. He'd somehow recognized that from the first moment he'd stepped into the train compartment.

"Alright, I'm dropping you off here. Make sure you get plenty of rest and I'll see you tomorrow. Don't even think about leaving here before I pick you up in the morning. Understood?"

Neville nodded obediently and stepped through the door. He gave a little chuckle to himself while waiting for the nurse to notice him. 'Does he even realize how he sounds?'

"Ah! Mr. Longbottom, what have you done to yourself now?"

'And Harry would say, 'Yes, he clearly decided to break his arm so he could write home about the experience.' [chuckle]

"I fell during flying class, ma'am."

In the meantime, Harry headed off to the library and a particularly reclusive corner. About half an hour into his search for relevant history, his quiet was rudely interrupted.

"You were ****supposed ****to be in Gryffindor, you know. I know all about you. I've read all the books you're in. Both your parents were in Gryffindor and it's also the Headmaster's house. It's clearly where you should have gone." Harry glanced up at a turned up nose and frizzy hair.

"Is that so."

"It is. Nearest I can figure is that you somehow talked the hat into putting you in Ravenclaw instead. That's why you had it on for so long. Why would you do that? Gryffindor is the greatest house of all!"

"Hm. I'm Harry. What was your name?"

"I'm Hermione Granger. I'm what they call a muggleborn. My parents were so proud of me. I'm the first witch in the family after allâ€¦."

"Mhm." Harry softly cut her off, "So Miss Granger, you think you know me better than I know myself?"

"Wha- um. No. I mean, I'm sure you have a reason for being sorted wrong. But you really should have let the hat do it's job properly. The professors have trusted the hat to sort students for the past 1,000 years, so clearly a student wouldn't know better than it."

'Is this girl serious? Why am I still talking to her? This is clearly Neville's fault!'

"I see. Well it's a good thing the hat was in agreement on where to put me then isn't it? Now if you'll excuse me I need to get back to studying...in a Ravenclaw way."

"There is no wayâ€|"

"Miss Granger. Why were you wrongly sorted? I know all about you from talking to you for two minutes, and you are clearly not a Gryffindor, but a Ravenclaw. Now it is my right to know why you decided to talk the hat into putting you into the wrong house, and I demand to know what it was. After all, the hat should be left to do it's job right? Unlike you, the hat and I agreed on where to place me. Please leave me alone." Harry was getting very irritated now. While the girl spluttered in surprise, he scooped EmberLight up off the book she'd been dozing on and swept off back to his tower.

'The nerve!' Echoed through two minds as the short conversation met its quick end.

****The Next Morning at Breakfast****

'Masquerade! Snooty faces on displayâ€|'

Masquerade! Hide your face so the world will never know you.

Masquerade! Every face a part to playâ€|'

Masquerade! Look around- There's another snake behind you!'

Harry watched in amusement as Draco and company sauntered over to a stop behind Neville's seat. Said seat was conveniently situated so it was directly across the aisle from Harry, so Draco was now standing between them.

"Lose something yesterday, did you Longbottom? I'm told you rode your broom like it was a wild hippogryph instead of like a proper wizard. Did you, perhaps, forget how? Or is this another way you blood traitors decided to break from our traditions?" Draco's nose was so high he had to be giving Neville an unpleasant view. He casually tossed Neville's dropped and forgotten Remembrall back and forth between his hands. His grandmother had sent the cloudy sphere to him the day before, which was when Draco had seen it as an opportunity to belittle him.

Neville almost hunched in on himself but stopped when he saw Harry peering expectantly at him from around Draco. That's right, Harry would expect him to stand up for himself. If he, Neville, managed to

say anything at all, Harry would probably finish Draco off for him. Harry would always provide him the support he needed in order to finish a goal, just as long as he showed actual effort towards achieving said goal first. This had been proven time and time again during their teamwork on homework assignments and physical health. (For some reason Harry was adamant that they eat healthy, citing some whales and walruses he was apparently related to...though Neville was relatively sure neither muggles nor wizards were actually related to animals.) Also, Harry refused to allow him to be weak. If he wanted to stay at his side, he would need to step it up and act like the strong man he hoped to someday be. A man like his father, the brave Auror Frank Longbottom.

"Ah! That I did Draco, but it seems that you've taken quite a fancy to my trinket. Perhaps you are in need of one yourself? I'm sure my Grandmother could spare the change to purchase another one for you. Or I suppose you could just have that one." Neville gave a shrug and watched in satisfaction as Draco's mask of arrogance momentarily faltered. He clearly hadn't expected the reaction he had gotten.

"I don't think I've met your friends, Draco." Harry pulled attention smoothly over, making the young slytherins turn around to look at him. As both Harry and Neville stood up from their meal, he continued, "I take it these are from theâ€ better was it? â€ Families."

Draco finally seemed to realize he'd trapped himself between a rock and a hard place. 'How very un-slytherin.' Harry mused as he stepped around the boy in question.

"Y-yesâ€ Well sort of. Potter! Where do you think you're going? You can't just walk away like this!"

"Sort of? Hmâ€. If you say so, Draco." The blonde was turning an interesting shade of pink. Clearly most of his better-than-you mask was just for show. "Please excuse us." With that, two heirs of Ancient and Noble houses swept away from the heir of the French Ancient house. When Harry had shared his discovery that Malfoy was a descendent from the French Knight Lancelot whose house still has never been legally recognized with citizenship of Magical Britain, Neville had just about died from laughter. They not only out ranked the blonde aristocrat, but they also belonged here at Hogwarts for more than a child of a foreign house. Playing by Malfoy's own rules would be a source of much amusement for both of them in the future. After all, Hogwarts and Magical Britain were simply an ongoing masquerade for the gentry, a masquerade where these two were fated to tear off many a mask.

Just before they passed through the doors, they heard Malfoy loudly proclaim, "You just wait till my father hears about this!"

'Your father is the mask you wear, it's him they hear!' Nope, Harry shook his head. That one just didn't follow the music enough. Bummer, it'd been a great opportunity. It also messed up his castings. 'Oh well, maybe next time.'

In the entryway, just outside the Great Hall they were cornered by Ron for yet another confrontation.

'My my, this day is shaping up to be quite annoying.' Harry gave an

exasperated sigh.

"They were all wrong about you! You aren't some hero! You're just another slimy evil dark wizard! I saw you being all friendly with Malfoy just now! You can't hide your true self from me. Neville, you should stay far away from this imposter just like I told you!"

"You told him to stay away from me?" A cold voice echoed around the entry way. Ron and Neville gave a little shudder at the cold, expressionless mask on Harry's face. "And what, pray tell, will you do to him if he doesn't bow to your demands?"

"Me and the other boys will show him the errors of his ways!" Ron quickly rallied his pompous stance.

"Is that so." Harry glared at the boy. Neville watched worriedly from the sidelines. Behind the boys, hidden in the shadows, a phantom was waiting for the opportune moment to swoop in and take points. "So what you're saying is that you are a bully. That you are a coward in need of minions to pick on someone else. That you can't see past the end of your nose or a family name. So what you're telling me is that you, Ron Weasley, should be remembered by me as a fool." The phantom's eyes widen briefly in surprise. "I am but acquaintances with both you and Draco. Your family feud has nothing to do with me or mine. But if you threaten us, then my own position will change. Are we clear?"

'When did Neville become mine!? Bloody hell Harry, what is wrong with you! I don't do friends! I don't trust anyone! And I most certainly do NOT draw battle lines. Fade into the background as much as possible you idiot!' His internal voice was frantically berating him when another voice cut through his thoughts.

"Ah! There it is! That incessant arrogance of your father! Going around threatening other students are we, Potter? Not on my watch. Twenty points from Ravenclaw. Another twenty points each from Gryffindor for fomenting. Now don't you have places to be?" The Phantom Snape swept past them and back to his dark dungeon.

'Perhaps to brew more portions of the night?' Harry absently thought. 'He knew my fatherâ€¦'

After a pale Ron disappeared around a corner, Neville turned back towards Harry. "I'm not going anywhere. I'm Gryffindor myself, remember? Brave, stubborn, and all that rot." He gave Harry a fake cocky wink and gave him a nudge with his shoulder. "Let's go."

Harry just gazed silently, with empty eyes, in the direction the Phantom of the Dungeon had vanished in. Then he gave a partial nod and moved to head towards the transfiguration classroom. He had never worn such a sad face in front of Neville before. It was the first time Harry had heard such a negative description in reference to his father by a fellow wizard. Sure his relatives had called his parents many horrible things, but every witch and wizard he'd come across had used a much different vocabulary for them. Once again he was left feeling lonely and wondering what they'd really been like.

'Wishing you were somehow here again.'

Wishing you were somehow near.

Sometimes it seemed

If I just dreamed

Somehow you would be here.'

5. Ch 4: Quoth the Dragon, Nevermore

Disclaimer: I do not own The Raven and all partial quotes from it belong to Edgar Allen Poe. I also do not own The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes.

On a side note, I know it's a bit hard to follow Harry's different conversations at times. He's been alone and abused for so long that he's developed his own imaginary world. Children/people who feel isolated or in need of an escape often will do that sort of thing. It's a coping mechanism. In Harry's case, since he's magical, I had his Imaginary world develop into his complex mindscape where he'll occasionally give snide/sarcastic remarks. Consider it like a running satire in his head. He wouldn't dare say it out loud which would result in a beating or other form of punishment. In the future, as Harry accepts the fact that he is no longer alone, there will be less need to talk to himself as he finds conversation partners in Neville etc. I also set him up to be advanced for his age vocabulary-wise. Considering his cousin's bullying tendencies, Harry probably spent all his down time at school hidden in a library where he could escape to other worlds. All that reading would naturally develop his speech to be more advanced than others would expect.

"Conversation"

'Internal Monologue'

~Dragontongue~

[Action]

* * *

><p>Chapter 4: Quoth the Dragon, Nevermore<p>

Time passed. Harry and Neville learned. Ron and Draco feuded. Toil and Trouble...sorry...Gred and Forge...no it was Fred and George...hmmmm... Toil and Trouble pranked. And the girl named Hermione Granger continued to know all things because she'd read about them in a book. Slowly, the girl found herself avoided by student and teacher alike. After all, it was quite intimidating to constantly be in the presence of an all knowing being. Tonight though, Hermione would face an experience that she didn't know all about. Sure, she'd read about them, but in reality, trolls were much more intimidating. All the knowledge she had stashed in her brain made absolutely no impact on what her hand and, by extension, wand did. In fact, her wand did absolutely nothing at all.

It was Halloween, and dinner at Hogwarts was in full swing. Everyone was celebrating quite happily just as they had celebrated every year for the last ten years and longer. Tonight was a night of candies and

pumpkins, of costumes and feasts, of laughs and screams, and of course victory over the Dark Lord Voldemort. This was also the night a certain young orphan knew as a time of commemoration and mourning. Harry was not at the feast. Nor was he in the library or the Ravenclaw common room. He wasn't even on his bed with the curtains drawn, eyes shut, and kitten staring worriedly at his face with two front paws balanced on his chin. No, Harry was in his mindscape looking through everything he'd learned about his parents. He was curled up in front of the telly memory player in the cottage living room. Unknown to him, Harry had been in his own mind until well past midnight, and EmberLight was at her limit with worry.

Suddenly there was a flash of lightning outside the cottage, and Harry was alerted to another presence entering his mind. This presence wasn't grating like Quirrell's and Snape's, nor was it unavoidable like the hat's. It was reassuring and moved calmly towards him like it belonged in his mind even though it was foreign to it. At a soft tap, the front door opened, and in walked a beautiful ebony dragon. From nose to tail tip was about a meter and from shoulder to toe was about 40 centimeters. She had horns that curved elegantly back from her head and her wings flared slightly at every step. Splashes of brilliant crimsons and golds throughout her scales made her chosen name proud. EmberLight's golden eyes stared intently into Harry's own emerald ones from across the room.

'How?'

'You worried me, Little Lord. It's November first now. You've been here for hours.'

'Yes... But how?'

'We've completed the familiar bond.'

'I see.'

EmberLight knew that Harry did not truly see. He still did not fully trust anyone. However, that had at least worked in her favor for once, as she was not human, but a dragon. Therefore, even though her young Dragon Lord was still shy and skittish at times, he had let her stay nearer than any other being in his life. Now, she would prove to him that his hesitant and shaky trust was well founded and safely guarded.

'I will never leave you, Dragon Lord. I am yours and you are mine.' At these words another flash of lightning crossed the sky and EmberLight seemed to gain a double. The second one drew closer to Harry while the original faded from view.

Harry stared at her for a few minutes before responding in a softly challenging voice.

'Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,

Over many a strange and curious volume of forgotten lore—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my cottage door.

" 'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my cottage doorâ€"

Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak November;

And the beast by name of Ember cast her shadow on the floor.

Nothing farther would be utteredâ€"not a wing would be
flutteredâ€"

Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown
beforeâ€"

On the morrow s_he_ will leave me, as my Hopes have gone
before."

Quoth the Dragon, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,

"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and
store

Caught from this unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till my songs one burden
boreâ€"

Till the dirges of my Hope that melancholy burden bore

Of 'Neverâ€"nevermore'."

At the end Harry had turned away from EmberLight to hide a face of
agony.

'Touche, Little Lord. I will leave you nevermore.' With that the
dragon quietly curled around Harry's huddled form. It was true.
EmberLight would always have a part of herself consciously dwelling
in Harry's mindscape for the rest of their lives, such was the power
level of this familiar bond.

****The Morning after Halloween****

Harry woke late for breakfast that friday morning. Yet, it had been
the best rest he could ever recall experiencing in his short life.
EmberLight had cuddled up tightly to him in both mind (as dragon) and
body (as kitten), providing a warm and rare sense of security.

With a spring in his step and Ember kitten still fast asleep (the bed
pocket on his bag had been yet another stroke of genius by Ethan),
Harry jogged quickly to the potions classroom. After greeting Neville
with the most brilliant smile the boy had ever seen, Harry plopped
into the seat next to him.

"Morning Neville. Did you enjoy the feast last night?"

"Morning Harry. Don't tell me you haven't heard?" Neville gave Harry

a quick searching look. "You haven't. Well, last night, right in the middle of the feast, Professor Quirrell came running into the Great Hall screaming about a troll in the dungeon. Being the useful sort of professor that he is, he then fainted. ('Wow, Harry is really rubbing off on me.') Everyone went into a panic until Professor Dumbledore ordered us all to our common rooms while the professors saw to the troll."

"But the Slytherin dorms are in the dungeons somewhere. Even the Hufflepuffs are close to the dungeonsâ€¦!"

"Yes, that thought went through my head as well. But what was I to do? I'm eleven. I can't go up again Professor Dumbledore in the middle of a crisis. I mean, he didn't even send the students with teachers, just prefects!"

"No, it wasn't your responsibility, Neville. Nothing you could have done. I'm sure if I had been somewhere other than my bed you would have found and warned me. That's what counts. Why not just lock the students safely in the Great Hall where they were already consolidated? I mean, they clearly must have assumed everyone was already at the feast, so that would be the logical decision, right? [tsk] How did a troll get in the school in the first place? I honestly don't know what to think about all this."

"It's fine if you don't know what to think, Mr. Potter. I highly doubt there is much room in that tiny brain of yours to do much extra thinking at all." Professor Snape limped to the front of the classroom with his signature sneer in it's usual place. "Five points from Ravenclaw for discussing non-class related matters." With that potions started in full swing.

After class, Harry and Neville headed to a private tower room they had discovered a few days prior. It was almost exactly equal distance between the Ravenclaw and Gryffindor common rooms and had a beautiful view of the Black Lake and some of the Forbidden Forest. It was almost as if Hogwarts had provided the room for her master's need of solitude. The two boys had been trying to get back to their common rooms after a long study session in a crowded library. The stairs had kept moving to force them further up. Finally giving up on the endeavor to sleep, they'd followed where the stairs led. At the top of the stairs had been a beautiful statue of a napping dragon. The words "Never tickle a sleeping dragon." were engraved on it's base.

Well, obviously Harry and Neville were much too smart to ignore a warning like that. In the end, EmberLight had hopped from Harry's shoulder to the nose of the statue where her little whiskers and paws tickled the statue into a fit of sneezes. One cannot possibly sleep through a fit of fire and smoke inducing sneezes, and so the dragon rose to sit on it's haunches and gaze down at the impudent whelps that had so rudely awakened him. How handy it had been that Harry was not only a Dragon Lord but also the owner and master of Hogwarts! Oddly enough, he hadn't needed to tell the dragon his credentials before the beast seemed to recognize him and step smoothly to the side. Anyways, long story short, the dragon, Custos, had been hiding the entrance to a suite of rooms in the highest tower of Hogwarts. Now he guarded the same door as the private get-away room for Harry and Neville.

"So tell me what happened after the teachers went after the troll? Did the students have trouble getting to the common rooms?"

"Well, no one in Gryffindor took a roll call so no one in our house noticed anyone was missing. Did no one notice you were neither at the feast nor in the common room? [a negative shake of a head] Guess it wasn't just Gryffindor negligence. Anyways, do you remember Hermione Granger? She's in Gryffindor in our yearâ€¦ [an affirming nod] Well you see, she wasn't at the feast either! Apparently, Ron said something nasty behind her back, which turned out to be right in front of her. She'd been crying all evening in the girls lavatory where the troll found her. She's in the hospital wing with serious injuries. So in answer to your question before class, no the feast wasn't that great." Neville finished his report with a rueful shake of his head and dropped onto the old sofa they had dragged over by a window. Great clouds of dust billowed out of the cushions. Harry opted to lean against the, thankfully, open window while he filed away all the information that Neville had given him. There were definitely some tidbits of alarming red flags here and there that he would have to process later.

"Well, I suppose she would appreciate a copy of our class notes. Probably more than any usual patient would." [two dry chuckles]

"I didn't realize you were that close to her?" Neville couldn't hide his surprise at the decision.

"I'm not. But that doesn't change the golden rule now does it?" At Neville's confused look, Harry rolled his eyes and continued. "'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' In other words I would appreciate it if someone gave me a copy of their notes if I missed classâ€¦ you get it. Consequently, I also follow the inverse interpretation of that same rule. For example, if you mistreat someone, then you clearly wish to be mistreated in return. That's how so many laxatives made it into the meals I make for my relativesâ€¦ BLOODY HELL I can't believe I just told you that! Forget everything I just said Neville. It's all Ember's fault! She's got me so relaxed I'm being loose-tongued!" This was accompanied by a panicked Harry-face and a kitten who appeared to be rolling on the floor growling out little kitten laughs.

Neville gave him a calm smile that completely covered his inner delight at this breaking of Harry's usual standoffish front. "Not a worry, Harry. I don't remember what you wanted me to forget. I gave my remembrall to Draco, you seeâ€¦" [wink]

That said, the boys settled down for a few minutes of relaxation before they headed down to lunch. Harry was quickly caught up in memories of his own injuries and how amazed he'd been at the magical healing abilities wizards had. The Granger girl would be healed up in no time, he had no doubt.

_____*_*_*_*Flashback to One Week before Kings Cross Station*_*_*_*_

Harry and EmberLight slipped quietly into the dark kitchen at the Dursley's. It was one o'clock in the morning, and even though he now had a stasis cupboard in his little Trunk Home, Harry had a hard time keeping up on groceries. The magi-carpenter, Ethan Bond, had suggested the cupboard when Harry had inquired about getting a fridge or the wizard equivalent. It was already a life saver. When before,

Harry would've had to go up to three days with only a piece of bread and some water as punishment for whatever crime he allegedly committed, now Harry could eat a small meal three times a day. (His stomach just wouldn't allow for much more.) However, the pounds he'd exchanged for at Gringotts had finally run out, and now he was ready to go back to his old scavenging habits. At least he wasn't locked in and could actually get to the kitchen! Next summer he'd have to budget his money better.

'Not too bright now are we? Going to starve to death, but at least we'll look nice doing it! It's all well worth it.' **Me** gave a very sarcastic run down of the current situation.

'Hey! I'm only 11! It's not like I had any experience with money up to this point! I won't need new clothes next year so it will be completely different.' **I** declared confidently.

'But **Myself** will still want more novels and muggle study booksâ€|' **Me** whispered.

'Hey stop being so negative **Me**!' **I** sounded quite indignant.

'You know, they say a sign of madness is when a person starts talking, arguing, and then loosing said arguments with him or herself.' **Myself** put in his two pence.

'Oh bother. This is just not going to work.' Harry ended the conversation abruptly as his stomach gave an angry groan. He quickly pulled a cabinet door open and dug around in the back for a forgotten can of...well anything edible really. 'Nope, keeping up Me, Myself, and I personalities would be an unrealistic amount of effort. I'll just have to think of some other way to differentiate Harry Potter The-Boy-Who-Lived and Ghost Freak The-Slave-of-Relatives. Oh the tribulations of raising oneself! It is truly overwhelming some daysâ€| Speaking of which, what do we have here?'

Hanging on the fridge was a doctor's form for Dudley to have filled out at an appointment in a few days. Apparently it was required that all students entering Smeltings Academy had a full physical with proof of up-to-date immunizations.

'Hmmmmmmâ€| I wonder if I needed to do that for Hogwarts? Hagrid didn't mention it, but he wasn't exactly helpful beyond showing me where Diagon Alley's basic shops and Gringotts areâ€| He didn't really go over the school requirements or rules.' Harry had found a book later that covered most of that information: Hogwarts, a History. 'Maybe I should get a health appointment as well? Does the magical world have its own hospital like it does a bank? Drat. More to look into, and now I'm running out of time before I actually leave!'

The next day, Harry and EmberLight double checked Dudley's second bedroom and Harry's cupboard under the stairs for any and all things that might have been forgotten. Everything that belonged to Harry was now safely stashed in his trunk hanging on the chain around his neck. EmberLight had decided to switch things up and morphed into a black squirrel instead of the normal kitten appearance she used for their public appearances. Harry himself was in the guise of a blonde young man with warm brown eyes. He'd had to pick up a set of larger clothes

so he could look the part of a responsible adult so as not to draw the attention of concerned mothers. The sight of a well-dressed little boy wandering around by himself seemed to stir some strange sense of protectiveness and nosy responsibility in older people. However, these same people would blissfully look the other way when passing a skittish child in the company of a much better dressed and clearly normal family.

Anyhow, getting back on track, Harry and EmberLight were leaving for Diagon Alley with no intention of returning till the next summer. After choking down a disgusting can of green beans the night before, boy and tiny dragon had further discussed his money situation and the doctor's form. Harry and EmberLight had decided it would be best to stay the last few days before classes started at the pub in Diagon Alley where they had stayed the night with Hagrid. After all, he still had plenty of galleons! During this time they would hopefully get Harry in to see a doctor. Form or no form required, he still had a lot of health issues that needed tending, as Ember pointed out. After paying for a five night stay, the bartender in the pub was more than happy to point them toward St. Mungo's which was the wizarding equivalent to a hospital. They set an appointment for the next day at 10 o'clock.

As it so happened, it was during Harry's morning preparation for his doctor's appointment that he got his inspiration for how to create separate personas without developing a personality disorder and driving himself mad! He would attach different personality traits, such as silence, apathy, and autopilot, to pieces of clothing, such as an old, too-big t-shirt, ripped up jeans, and duct taped trainers with a hole in one of the toes and the soles peeling back. These pieces of clothing would be stored in a trunk in the tower of his mind's cottage. He would don the necessary articles of "clothing" depending on his environment. The current set was dubbed "Ghost Freak", and it would be exchanged during the train ride for the set he'd make for "Evan Jameson". "Evan Jameson" would be his "normal/true personality" and would consist of different pieces of his base traits for other necessary sets he might need in the future. Once he settled on the traits/personality of "Harry Potter The-Boy-Who-Lived", he'd change into that at Hogwarts. This system might be slightly complicated to set up, but in the long run it would make his life much simpler. Harry had no idea how advanced his natural occlumency must have been in order to be able to achieve this endeavor with no help or instruction. Not that he would have cared, come to think of it.

A long walk through London, a longer rest in a waiting room, and a short wait in patient room #3 and Harry finally got to meet his doctor healer.

"Hello Mr. Potter. It's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Healer Greengrass and I'll be the one helping you today, and if all goes well, any time you need medical attention in the future. Now, I am to understand that your guardians, both magical and muggle, were unable to make this appointment? It's rather unusual to see an underage patient without a guardian, you see."

"My magical guardian is illegally staying in magical prison. My muggle guardians are unable to look at me without wishing to do illegal harm to myself. So you see, today it's just me." Harry gave the man a half smirk. "I did read your Healer Vows and underage or

not, you are magically bound to your patient's privacy. Meaning, you can't inform anyone else of my state of health or anything I tell you, correct?"

Healer Greengrass was now carefully looking Harry over. "Yes, that is correct. Absolutely nothing will leave this room. Your choice of words bring many questions to mind. Any chance of getting them answered?"

"Beyond what you find out for yourself, no." Harry responded flatly. Vow or no vow, there was only so far he was willing to open himself up.

"Fair enough. Shall we begin?" And with that, 13 fractured, broken, or poorly mended bones were identified. Malnutrition and a lack of any immunizations, magical or muggle, were recorded. And lastly, horrendously bad eyesight and an improper glasses' prescription were declared outrageous. Disgusting bone-healing potions were poured down his throat and a box of chalk flavored nutrition potions were deposited in his lap to be taken daily. His eyes were bathed in a irritating potion held up to his face in a cup type gizmo for three minutes and a short spell chant. The immunizations had been given to him to take at hour intervals the next day. It would be too much for his body and magic to handle all at once, especially on top of what it had already helped to fix that day. However, when Harry mentioned the parasite shard the goblins had found, the healer had said he'd need to search out a proper specialist for that sort of thing. Harry would probably have to wait till next summer to get rid of it. Well, he'd survived it for ten years already, what was one more?

One day later, Harry was exhausted and sore. Two days later, he couldn't wake up let alone move, much to the concern of a certain dragon. Three days later, an ecstatic EmberLight greeted a Dragon Lord who had never felt better or seen clearer before in his entire short life.

****Back to the Present****

Time passed quickly from Halloween to Christmas break. Neville had looked hesitant to leave him alone for the holidays much to Harry's amusement. He'd been alone all his life so he wasn't really worried about missing Neville. Yes, the boy had gotten closer to him than any other human being, but that didn't mean Harry needed him. For once he wouldn't be in a cupboard during Christmas day and he wouldn't be alone, EmberLight would be there. All was well in the world.

So Neville packed his things up and headed down to the train. Harry said good bye at the entrance. Enjoying the beautiful snow covered scenery from a warm vantage point was much more to his liking. If Neville was going to leave him then he could go on his bloody own through that muddy slush and cold carriage ride! 'Not that I'm holding his leaving against him, mind you. It's just the principle of the matter.' [curt nod]

Dinner that evening was dull. Hogwarts was empty with the exception of a dozen or so students who were too busy studying or just trying to avoid something or other by hiding within the halls of the school. The Weasley redheaded horde was present, surprisingly. With such a big family Harry assumed they'd make Christmas a big yearly family event. Before he could make a swift escape after downing a small pile

of mashed potatoes and steak, he was accosted and firmly escorted into a nearby classroom.

"Well hello there"

"Little Harry No-Name!"

"The last time we talked"

"You held out on us, you did!"

"That's true, brother George."

"True indeed, brother Fred."

"Ducking away from us,"

"At our first meeting with nary a name!"

"Avoiding us at all costs,"

"When you see us in the halls."

"Downright hurtful, that is."

"Pierced us right through the heart." They ended in sync again. Harry wondered how they did that or if they planned their speeches out before hand. If they did plan them, that would greatly decrease the awe of their ability to speak in such a away.

"I'm not sure what you mean. I'm sorry if I came off rude, but you are third year students with a hard-won reputation I'm sure you're proud of. You can understand my respectful distance, I'm sure." Harry tried to placate them with ego-soothing reason.

"Well played!"

"Well played indeed!"

"But we are not so easily blinded"

"By praise. Nor are we so easily"

"Swayed off subject."

"You didn't know us"

"To be wary of us."

"You avoided giving your name because you hate attention."

'Finally a full sentence by just Trouble!' Harry gave a mental cheer.

"That's true. I also am a pretty good judge of character. Seeing you two mess around for less than two minutes revealed your jokester nature. I've been targeted by bullies before, and I don't wish to deal with that again."

Both twins eyed him speculatively.

"Look Toil and Trouble, if I've hurt your feelings I apologize. If I judged too quickly, it is my mistake. I've never seen you hurt anyoneâ€|" Harry was praying they would release him as boring prey and move on.

"We aren't bullies."

"Sure, we've taken it too far once and awhile."

"But we wouldn't knowingly hurt someone,"

"Or put someone in danger."

"We do have brains."

"More than some other wizards around here."

"Aye, other wizards such as the one who put a death threat on the third floor corridor in school full of children."

"Or another one who bullies children to make up for his own school experience?"

"We see things, Little Harry."

"We hear things, Little Eaglet."

"Things from Ron, perhaps?" Harry challenged them. He knew Ron still called him names behind his back and spread false rumors when possible. Though he did leave Neville to his own devices after Harry's warning. 'The pompous prat! He and Draco have more in common than they know.'

"Yes, we've heard the things that Ron has to say."

"And we've also sought out the truth behind them."

Although the back and forth conversation had finally started to include complete sentences before the swap, it was still hard work following these two. Yet he couldn't just rudely walk away either. They were amusing if one didn't have to be wary of them as a threat. [sigh]

"I see. Well, let's cut to the chase then, shall we? Do you wish to see me humbled at your hands or can I rest assured that you are my allies and not my hunters?"

"Well it seems to me"

"That we are your hunters!"

'Drat them! They went back to fragmented sentences again!'

"We will hunt the prey"

"That our mighty Eagle sees."

"We are your Toil and Trouble!"

"Though which is which?"

"Oh, illusive Eaglet, can you tell? "

"Ah, so you did catch that. How embarrassing. Well I know you mix up your names every which way. Therefore I really have no idea which of you bears which of your legal names. However, you [points to the twin whose eyes appraise your weaknesses] are 'Trouble' and you [points to the twin whose eyes appraise your potential] are 'Toil'. From the moment I first saw you, these were your names." Harry's cheeks reddened and he gazed blankly out the window.

The twins, on the other hand, were ecstatic.

"Did you hear that Toil!?"

"We've been blessed with names!"

"From before we first met!"

"And they're perfect!"

"Tell us, can you really tell us apart?"

"Turn around! We're going to test this out!"

Harry was whipped around to fully face a stone wall while steps and rustling cloth could be heard from behind him.

"All right!"

"Turn around!"

"Who's who!?" This was said in sync once again.

Harry couldn't hide his smirk as he pointed out which twin went with which name. They had switched articles of clothing and walked around a bit so he wouldn't know from obvious clues. Too bad it was all in the eyes! [evil internal laugh]

"Blimey! You really can tell us apart."

"Well, we won't tell you which of us is really Fred and which is really George."

"You understand, we do need to keep some mystery!"

"That's completely understandable." Harry quickly agreed. It wasn't like it matter to him. He wouldn't have remembered anything but Toil and Trouble within three minutes of leaving the room anyways. Well, unless he really dug for the information in his archive of course, but that took such effort! "So are we good?"

"Yes, we're good"

"So very good!"

"Good at potions"

"Good at charms"

"Good at pranks"

"Others be warned!"

"We are the junior marauders!"

"If you ever need some hunters,"

"Call upon your Toil and Trouble!"

"We'll be there on the double,"

"Good night, Our Eaglet!" With that the twins bounced out the doors. Mission to approach Harry completed.

With a sigh of relief, Harry quietly slipped up to his own bed to sleep. Though it did cross his mind whom he wished to set his new found hunters on...

'The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.

The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,

And the marauders came prankingâ€"

Prankingâ€"Prankingâ€"

The marauders came pranking, up to the Phantom's-door.'

****Christmas Day****

This was by far the best Christmas Harry had ever had. His cloak had decided to return to him. Well the thief finally relinquished itâ€|. Did whoever wrote the unsigned note really think he'd believe that his father who was IN HIDING had turned over something so useful as an invisibility cloak to someone else over his own family? Really? Highly doubtful. But what was done was done and it was back where it should be, with Harry.

Neville had sent him a fireproof blanket, and wasn't that slightly concerning? It was big enough to comfortably cuddle both him and EmberLight in full dragon form. In varying shades of dark green with leaves stitched here and there, it was the softest, warmest blanket he'd ever seen. Neville had sent him a little piece of heaven! Perhaps you had to know the cold of being locked into a dark cupboard during a snowstorm to really appreciate a blanket. The heaters' comfort never did reach the cupboard under the stairs, surprise surprise. How on earth had Neville guessed how much this gift would mean to him? Maybe the fact that he instinctively huddled as close as possible to any and all heat sources had tipped him off. Their private tower rooms had an old fireplace that was luckily still in working order, so they spent a lot of time ensconced there. If Harry could he would go into hibernation. That's a fact. Harry was thankful he'd thought to owl order a seedling devil's snare for Neville after the boy had gone on about the octopus-wanna-be for a week straight.

In another package from the twins, he found a Honeydukes chocolate bar and a prank potion that would turn the drinker into eagle for an hour. Random, but much appreciated. 'Well perhaps not so random. They did call me their Eaglet.' He'd keep the potion safe incase he needed a quick escape some day. The chocolate was put in his stasis cabinet for future need.

'You are not Eaglet! The nerve of those red monstrosities! I'm going to give them a piece of my mind later! Degrading Dragon Lord down to a mere bird!' EmberLight blew a great breath of flame in Harry's mind's forest to prove her point.

'You may, with my blessing, my most beautiful queen of the skies.'
Harry gave her a smirk.

Hermione had sent him a book about proper quill usage. Apparently the notes he'd given her during the two weeks she'd been imprisoned in the hospital wing were "illegible, but suitably comprehensive of the subjects once I was able to translate them." Rude as always, but the book would definitely be read. He hadn't gotten her anything as he didn't really consider her more than an acquaintance. 'Oh well. How was I to know she'd send me something. I wasn't expecting anything at all, least of all from her!'

It was after the last present had been opened that his magical core decided to send him a gift as well. He held his clenched fists tightly to his heart as he tried to breath through the feeling of his magic twisting temporarily out of his tight control. Green and gold bursts of lightening encircled him, giving off a feeling of ecstasy. He'd never felt so strange, so heady. Then, something was in his fist that hadn't been there a moment before. When he opened his hand, there lay his tiny fairy pixie. No taller than his pinkie, she had wings and hair to remind him of a sunset. Norstra was wearing an emerald green dress that was clearly made from his own raw magic. Wait.

'Norstra?' Golden eyes blinked up at him from both mindscape and hand.

'Yes, that is my name, Harry,' a soft voice echoed through his mind's cottage. 'You have finally found a place of safety and have fully healed. Now I can actually separate from your core and accompany you on your life's adventure. I will sleep in your core again only if it becomes necessary.'

'Just out of curiosity, how did I know your name?'

'Because it is a part of you just as I am. We were born together. We have grown together. Isn't it natural that you should know my name?'

'Yes, I suppose it is. Welcome back to wakefulness my Guiding Light, there is someone I wish you to meet. EmberLight, come meet our Norstra.' While dragon and pixie had flitted around his mind's cottage establishing who had what responsibility, Harry came to a sudden revolutionary realization.

'I really _will _be alone, **nevermore**.'

End
file.